



EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 2018

142nd Year, No. 120

WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

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Morrow slated to get solar farms

Comment period on Carty project closes Friday

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Morrow County may soon see the development of two new solar facilities with the ability to produce 125 megawatts within its boundaries.

The Carty Facility has plans for a new solar farm on its property, and the deadline for a public comment period on the siting of the facility is Friday. Another solar farm, the Boardman Solar Farm, is planned for an area in northwestern Morrow County, but no immediate plan has been made for construction.

Max Woods, a senior policy adviser for the Oregon Department of Energy, said the Carty facility will be part of the complex that also houses the Carty Generating Station and the Boardman coal plant.

Portland General Electric is the site certificate holder for the Carty solar farm, Woods said, and the property is on 300 acres south of the Carty facility.

Members of the public have until Friday to offer general comments on the facility, but will be able to comment on the proposed order of the facility at a later date.

Woods said the final decision lies with the Energy Facility Siting Council, a panel of governor-appointed volunteers that oversee the development of large statewide energy projects.

He said the production potential of the Carty solar plant is estimated at 50 megawatts, which is how much energy it could produce at any given time when all the conditions are just right.

Woods said there seems to be a new trend of having multiple energy production projects in the same area, such as the Carty facility does.

"There are places that combine wind and solar," he said. "I'd guess outside Oregon, it's normal for natural gas and coal (facilities) to be close by, to take advantage of the infrastructure."

See SOLAR FARMS/5A



Staff photos by E.J. Harris

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden takes a moment of contemplation before answering a question during a town hall Tuesday at Umatilla High School.

Back and forth on gun control

Wyden town halls in Umatilla, Boardman target gun debate

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Students came prepared this week with some tough questions for Senator Ron Wyden on one of the most polarizing issues of the day — gun control.

At Umatilla and Riverside high schools on Tuesday and Wednesday, Wyden held court with students and community members for his annual town hall meetings.

Many students at both schools held different views from Wyden on guns, but had thoughtful, complicated questions for him.

A student at Riverside High School openly admitted that his views likely diverged with Wyden's.

"I want to feel protected," he said. "But I don't know if the changes you're proposing are going to be effective in reality. Why do you believe universal background checks or mental health checks are



Umatilla sophomore Samantha Farrester asks a question about mental evaluations during a town hall with U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden on Tuesday at Umatilla High School.

going to prevent mass shootings?" The student continued that he was unsure of where to draw the line when classifying someone as

having "a history of mental health issues."

"I have a very long history with something — ADHD," he said. "Is

that a problem, or is it something more severe?"

Wyden cited the importance of various community members working together.

"I don't pretend to be an expert, and it's a good point you're making," he said. "This is not something you can do just by shouting 'mental health,'" he said. "You really need to think through the implications."

At both meetings, Wyden outlined his goals for gun violence prevention.

"If someone has mental health problems, domestic violence in their background, on a terrorist watchlist," Wyden said. "I want background checks for every time a gun is sold in America. That applies to gun shows, any kind of sale at all. Right now, we have this hit-and-miss system."

See TOWN HALLS/5A

'I want to feel protected. But I don't know if the changes you're proposing are going to be effective in reality. Why do you believe universal background checks or mental health checks are going to prevent mass shootings?'

a student at Riverside High School



Barbara Leinweber, right, helps Jim Hudson with a hat he purchased from the thrift store in August 2017 at the Pendleton Senior Center. Lunch service was cut at the senior center in March after the cook resigned.

EO file photo

PENDLETON

Senior center stops lunches, shortens hours

Cook resigns, ending meal service and cutting revenue

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

For the second year in a row, the Pendleton senior center is taking an extended hiatus from serving meals.

Vicki Muller, who oversees the senior center's congregate meals program as the director of food services at the Community Action

Program of East Central Oregon, said the lunch services were stopped the week of March 19.

CAPECO is interviewing and screening applicants, she said, and although she hopes to restart the program within the next two weeks, there is no firm date for resumption.

Officially known as the Active Senior Center of Pendleton, CAPECO rents a kitchen at the facility and normally serves lunch four days a week to 25-40 people.

See SENIOR CENTER/5A

